

# WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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*Experience the Power of Education*

**State of the University Address**  
**President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.**  
**P. Ahmed Williams Auditorium, Ferrell Hall**  
**October 18, 2013**  
**10:00 a.m.**

Good morning. Welcome to the State of the University!

It is a true honor and privilege to stand before you today and have an opportunity to highlight the events of the past year and look toward our future – a future that will not be possible without the support of our students, our faculty, our staff, and our alumni as well as the Kanawha Valley and the State of West Virginia.

I would like to begin by acknowledging a few groups that are critical to OUR University!

To the Higher Education Policy Commission, I say welcome and thank you for your dedication to our students and students across the State of West Virginia. Please give them a round of applause.

To Chair Susman and members of the University's Board of Governors, I say welcome and thank you for your leadership and the love you display every day for this Great University. Let's give them a round of applause.

To members of the shared governance team, please stand when I call your name:

- ◆ Faculty Senate Chair Ruhnke,
- ◆ Student Body President Dianellos,
- ◆ Classified Staff Chair Hunt,
- ◆ Members of the President's Cabinet, and
- ◆ Our Academic Deans...

Thank you for your dedication and service!

All of these individuals standing before you work hard every day to create new possibilities for our University!

I am proud of our teamwork and the success it has cultivated.

Collectively, they have made great strides through shared governance on behalf of the State family.

Join me in giving them a round of applause.

Thank you and please be seated.

I would also like to acknowledge someone who has provided steadfast guidance and enduring support – that is my lovely wife, Dr. Marisela Rosas Hemphill, who is joined by our children Catalina and Cruz and my mother-in-law, Maria!

Please join me in giving my family a round of applause.

I truly believe that West Virginia State University will become the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the State of West Virginia and beyond.

You have heard me say this over the course of the past year.

And, as I stand before you today, I am more certain than ever that this is a goal well within our grasp.

Why? An intense and focused commitment to:

1. RECRUITMENT
2. RETENTION AND DEGREE COMPLETION
3. REBRANDING AND MARKETING
4. RESEARCH GROWTH
5. ENHANCING AND EXPANDING OUR ACADEMIC OFFERINGS
6. ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND PHILANTHROPIC GIVING
7. AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE

This is why!

These initiatives are gaining great momentum for West Virginia State University.

When I stood before you in October 2012 for my inaugural State of the University Address and when I spoke at countless events in the first year of my presidency, it was my vision at that point.

And it remains my vision now.

I am proud – so very proud – to report that WE are well on our way to making that vision a reality.

Over the course of the past year, by holding on to our mantra of "One Message, Many Voices" at the forefront of our minds and on the tips of our tongues, we have been delivering the State story.

A story of how we embraced our rich history, defined our future, and secured our success.

We proudly told our story to traditional audiences.

Prospective students and their families embraced our message in record numbers.

We boldly stepped forward to increase our connection to audiences outside our immediate area.

We consistently told our story to friends and followers on social media, website visitors, interstate travelers, television watchers, and newspaper readers.

We told our story through new and powerful publications such as State magazine and the annual President's Report.

We took bold steps forward in reaching out and connecting with others, but there are still unnumbered masses who have not yet heard our story.

A story of dedication, determination, and perseverance.

I promise to continue telling our story each and every day, but I need your help.

Each one of you is a representative of State.

You tell our story in your daily interactions, your casual conversations, and in the way you carry yourself as you walk through this community.

Continue to serve as positive representatives of our University and encourage others to look at State with the same passion and enthusiasm we feel!

Believe me when I say our hard work is paying off.

The increased visibility of WVSU with a concentrated focus on our benefit to the Valley and the state has moved segments of the community to embrace us.

From the quality of our academic programs to the consistent interactions and engagement with our alumni and friends, our presence has been felt across the Valley.

We cannot stop there!

We must not stop there!

Together, we are building a strong foundation for our future.

This foundation is being built every day by members of the State family...

A major factor for State's increasing presence in the Valley rests with its faculty!

Whether you speak with an alumnus from 1937 or 2007...a common theme is the difference faculty made in their lives.

The strength of the faculty was one of the major determining factors in my decision to take this opportunity to serve as your president.

Just consider this:

Dr. Juris Lidaka, who completed time at the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Research Institute at the Newberry Library in Chicago, is now a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Scholar.

Dr. Billy Joe Peyton completed a book on the history of Charleston titled, "Historic Charleston: The First 225 Years."

Dr. Gerald Hankins received a \$50,000 grant for a project titled, “Specialty Mushroom as a Niche Market Crop for Limited Resource Small Family Farm,” in collaboration with Dr. Kit Chin of Southern University.

Dr. David Huber published an article in Bioresource Technology titled “Thermophilic anaerobic co-digestion of poultry litter and thin stillage.”

Dr. Umesh Reddy who, with the help of his team, just received a grant for \$440,000+ from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture about diversifying the watermelon cultivar genetic base using genomic selection to improve nutraceutical traits and use them as parental lines.

These examples merely scratch the surface of how our faculty are experiencing immense success outside of the traditional classroom setting.

I am proud – so very proud – of them!

Our faculty are not alone in their success.

Our Extension Service continues to expand its reach in West Virginia, bringing awareness to those not reached by traditional university offerings.

Our University was instrumental in the creation of Beautification Toolkits to help communities around the site of the National Boy Scout Jamboree ensure that their towns put their best foot forward.

West Virginia State University also moved into McDowell County with the construction of a curbside garden at a local food bank, allowing organizers to supplement dry and canned goods with fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

This garden project has been featured on the website for the acclaimed interactive documentary, Hollow.

We are a small campus with big possibilities.

Possibilities that can only be accomplished through seizing opportunity and embracing innovation.

You need to only look at our dedicated and outstanding faculty and staff to see both are readily available right here on this campus.

Faculty and staff continue to serve the campus community in new and profound ways.

This year, we proudly opened the Military Student Services Center and the Office of Adult and Commuter Student Services.

Both offices will enhance our efforts to recruit, retain, and – but most importantly – graduate non-traditional students specifically veterans and adult learners.

It is not only our hard working faculty and staff that ignite energy and passion in our University, but our students have also excelled in their respective curricular and co-curricular activities!

Our academic quiz bowl team reached the Final Four round of competition in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge National Championship Tournament in Los Angeles with the support of their adviser, Belinda Fuller.

Competing against 48 other schools from around the country representing Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the Yellow Jackets advanced through two days of competition to reach the Final Four where they fell to Morgan State University, the eventual National Champion.

Two WVSU students are currently finalists in a statewide student video competition of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's Division of Science and Research STaR Symposium.

The students are Hannah Cavendar and Kevin Carte.

They will travel to Morgantown later this month to present their work to contest judges.

Students brought home top honors from the National Broadcasting Society – Alpha Epsilon Rho when they received the National Chapter of the Year award at the society's annual meeting in March.

The award is the highest honor given by the National Broadcasting Society.

In addition to being named National Chapter of the Year, our students also received the Motivated Chapter award for community service, membership growth, scholarship fundraising and on and off campus activities.

Our student chapter of the American Chemical Society received its second consecutive Outstanding Chapter Award for 2012-2013.

They also received the Green Chemistry Chapter recognition for the fourth year in a row.

Since forming in 2009, the group has won two outstanding ratings, two commendable ratings, four Green Chemistry awards, three community interaction grants and two travel grants to attend the annual American Chemical Society national meeting.

Thank you, Dr. Fultz for guiding these young minds.

Under the leadership of Coach Oree Banks, the WVSU Chapter of the NAACP received a national award for the largest membership increase among college chapters in the organization. The Chapter received the 2013 Chairman's Trophy at the 104th annual NAACP Convention in Orlando, Florida in July.

Our students are excelling both in the classroom and in competition.

Our women's softball and tennis teams were the 2013 WVIAC champions.

Let's give all of our student groups a big hand for all that they do.

Students, I can assure you, as a University, we will highlight and celebrate you every chance that we get.

Each and every day, we are making improvements to our campus from the ground up to provide a living and learning experience that is second to none.

We are currently in the final stages of renovation to Fleming Hall, which was originally built in 1941.

It will soon be home to state-of-the-art classrooms as well as programming, meeting, and athletic space.

The renovation and expansion of Fleming Hall, which includes approximately 40,000 square feet of renovated space and 35,000 square feet of new space, has been the topic of conversation for a very long time.

It will officially come to life for this University in February 2014.

The new Convocation Center will include seating for 1,350 Yellow Jacket fans for men's and women's basketball as well as women's volleyball and seating for 2,200 for large University events such as Commencement.

The transition from the Gymnasium to the Convocation Center will be an experience not only for our student-athletes, but for our entire University community.

On March 1, 2014, that transition will occur with the men's and women's basketball teams playing their first games in the Convocation Center.

I am happy to announce the Fleming Hall Gymnasium – “the Pit” – will soon be named after a State sports legend.

The court will bear the name of an individual who Basketball Hall of Fame member Earl Lloyd once called a “father-figure.”

The State family will forever etch the name of Mark Cardwell, a 1925 graduate and a 1980 “W” Club Hall of Fame Inductee, on our historic campus as the Fleming Hall Gymnasium becomes home to the Coach Mark Cardwell Court.

Please join me in recognizing the significant impact of Coach Cardwell on our Great University and his family who are here with us today!

As you look around campus, Fleming Hall is not the only construction you see.

Approximately, one month ago, we joined together to break ground on the Judge Damon J. Keith Scholars Hall.

Judge Keith, a nationally renowned member of the judiciary and a civil rights leader, serves as an inspiration to our campus community as an individual who walked our very halls and achieved greatness.

It is an honor that our first new residence hall since 1969 will bear his distinguished and celebrated name.

The residence hall will provide a state-of-the-art experience for all students featuring suite-style living with two-, three- and four-bedroom suites, in addition to a gaming room, cyber café, and meeting space.

It will open in August 2014!

These types of changes have not gone unnoticed.

Alumni and others, who support the University financially, have turned out in record numbers.

In terms of philanthropic giving, we have increased from \$620,000 in Fiscal Year 2012 to \$2.25 million in Fiscal Year 2013!

This represents....a 354 percent increase!

Our goal for this year is even higher!

We set a target of \$4 million for Fiscal Year 2014!

And, thus far, we have gifts and pledges of \$1.9 million in just the first quarter of this year.

In addition to acquiring critical resources to support the University, we are also growing the University in terms of enrollment.

Last year, we welcomed 291 first-time, full-time freshmen to the University. This fall, we welcomed 432 first-time, full-time freshmen to the State family.

Folks, that represents an increase of nearly 50 percent.

I think many in the room will agree that our increased freshmen class was evident during State Stride.

On that day, the excitement and pride of our campus was unquestionable.

I cannot wait to welcome next year's students – a class that I know will be even larger than this year's!

No pressure, Vice President McCarthy!

To the Class of 2017, the individuals who supported you on that day by lining Campus Walk, welcoming you to the State family, and cheering you on will continue throughout your academic career.

You can count on us!

I promise you that!

Under no circumstances should you walk away from your dream of a college degree without giving us a chance to help you succeed.

Together, we will provide the network of support that you need to achieve academic success, create meaningful relationships inside and outside the classroom and continue your development into engaged leaders in a global world of opportunities and challenges.

As we prepare for our future, many of you will remember that I challenged all faculty to become or remain actively engaged in our research efforts and many have answered the call.

At that time, I also urged us, as an institution, to take research at State to another level.

I encouraged faculty to continue collaborating on research projects and funding opportunities that will enhance the experiences and the employment prospects for our students and our graduates.

Over the course of the past year, we showcased West Virginia State University as a leading institution of research in West Virginia.

For the first time ever, West Virginia State University was featured on the cover of West Virginia's Journal of Science and Research, The Neuron, with a profile of the vegetable-breeding work done by Dr. Barbara Liedl.

Thanks to support from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and American Electric Power, we launched the Full STEAM Ahead Program to increase the interest of young people – from kindergarten through baccalaureate degree programs – in energy and the STEAM fields of science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics.

We are making tremendous progress in the area of research!

That is why today I am making an important announcement.

Today, I am officially announcing the creation of the PEER Program. PEER stands for Promoting Excellence in Education through Research.

I am happy to say West Virginia State University – in partnership with Research Development Corporation – is committing \$500,000 over the course of the next five years directly supporting our faculty's research agenda.

PEER will be administered by Research and Public Service and supported by Title III Funds from the U.S. Department of Education and supplemented by other STEM-related state funds and foundation funds as well as and private dollars.

The purpose of this program is to support faculty by providing financial assistance and release time to encourage and foster the advancement of research and scholarly work, and to leverage these resources in order to attract funding to promote and support the enrichment of academia and student learning at the University.

Eligible faculty may submit proposals in one of the following grant categories:

- ◆ Applied and Basic Research;
- ◆ Summer Faculty Research Program;
- ◆ External Funding Proposal Preparation; and
- ◆ Matching Funds for External Funding.

There will be up to 10 grants during the fall and spring and 5 summer research grants, each with a maximum value of \$5,000 – resulting in a significant investment in our faculty!

PEER is an important step in promoting research in all Colleges and across all disciplines and providing each faculty member who is awarded a \$5,000 grant with a one-course release time for that semester.

Faculty are a critical aspect of our land-grant mission!

In an open forum during Homecoming, I heard from an individual who touted his faculty at WVSU as the best in the world.

He said our faculty are what make State so special.

And he is 100 percent correct!

Throughout my presidency, I have heard many stories of how faculty right here on our campus led individuals to find their passion, dream bigger dreams, discover talents they never knew existed, and open their mind to knowledge and understanding of the world that changed their lives.

To the faculty in the room, the time has come for WVSU to make a significant investment in each of you.

Today, I am proud to make another announcement as it relates to our faculty and their value to this University!

If you review any of my speeches and meetings with faculty throughout the year, the record will clearly show that I had the same message about addressing their value to State!

Faculty pay has been of the utmost importance since I arrived on campus.

Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to announce the first merit-based faculty salary increase since October 2008.

All full-time faculty will receive an across-the-board salary increase of 2 percent.

In addition, a merit pool of 2 percent will also be provided to 65 percent of full-time faculty.

The total maximum salary increase of 4 percent for the majority of full-time faculty will be provided effective January 1, 2014.

The Provost will send information regarding the merit review process to the Deans and Department Chairs immediately following the State of the University.

In addition to across-the-board and merit increases for full-time faculty, I am proud to announce that non-classified staff will be provided with a 2 percent across-the-board salary increase effective July 1, 2014.

During the past few years, the University has made continued investments in classified staff in order to fully fund the state salary schedule.

We will continue our commitment to fully funding this salary schedule with another classified staff salary increase of 3 percent for eligible employees effective July 1, 2014.

As we move forward, we must continue to find ways to invest in our University and the people who make it so special to so many!

Through implementing efficiencies, we were able to make these significant and needed investments in our people.

Such investments will become increasingly important as the state and nation continue to examine the ability to fund the many needed programs and services at all levels.

Over the course of the past year, we made some tough decisions in order to improve the financial stability of the institution.

Although these decisions were popular for some and unpopular for others, they were absolutely necessary in order for us to make strategic investments to grow the University.

But we must quickly begin to focus the State family on Fiscal Year 2015 to ensure we continue to propel West Virginia State University to new heights!

We must be proactive in our preparation for the future due to the changing economy of the state as well as the nation.

As a result, I am convening a Budget Efficiency Summit to discuss the Fiscal Year 2015 financial outlook.

The Summit will be held on Friday, November 1, 2013 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Erickson Alumni Center.

Mike McKown, Director of the State Budget Office, will be the featured speaker for the morning.

The Summit will also include on-campus representatives featuring students, faculty, staff, and administrators to have an in-depth and transparent discussion about the budget forecast for Fiscal Year 2015.

This afternoon, I will be in contact with Faculty Senate Chair Ruhnke; Student Body President Dianellos; and Classified Staff Chair Hunt to obtain recommendations for individuals to participate in this important discussion.

The group will include 5 students, 15 faculty members, 5 classified staff, and 5 administrators, plus the Vice Presidents.

It is our duty to ensure that West Virginia State University is well prepared long into the future.

Furthermore, we must remain good stewards of the public trust and the associated funding.

We must maximize our resources to provide a world-class education to all students at the lowest possible cost.

Access and opportunity are so critical!

As each of you in the room are well aware, West Virginia State University has a rich history and a powerful legacy spanning 122 years.

We are taking proactive steps to ensure the viability of our University for future generations of Yellow Jackets.

For the past year, a group has been meeting to establish goals and objectives to guide our University through the year 2020.

This effort will result in a comprehensive strategic plan, "*Vision 2020: State's Roadmap to the Future*," for implementation in early 2014.

Just last week, this group held a final meeting to hear reports from various Subcommittees.

These reports and the feedback received will provide the framework for our plan and our direction.

I look forward to working with each of you in the months and years to come as we define our own destiny and determine what role our University will play in this Great State!

The State of the University is strong and poised for another banner year.

Words such as excellence, accountability, and being student-centered in everything we do...guided our work this past year.

And it will continue to guide our work!

You embraced the mantra of "One Message, Many Voices."

This combined effort allowed us to tell our story.

You defined State!

We defined State!

In closing, I ask that you join me in making a pledge.

A pledge to ensure that the entire campus community will remain focused.

Focused on our future!

If we continue to pledge to do all that we can, there is no limit to what State can achieve.

Together, we will succeed.

Because of that, we sit here together as a State family poised for the second leg of the climb.

Maybe a little winded from the first 16 months, but ready to push through.

Why?

Because the place that “we love so dear” is fiscally stronger, the donors and alumni are engaged at record levels, and the faculty and staff believe in our mission of educating the citizens of our Great State, the nation, and the world.

And with your help, West Virginia State University will become the most student-centered, research and teaching, land-grant University in the State of West Virginia and beyond.

God Bless each of you and GO STATE!